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WEARDALE

Rural District Council.



ANNUAL REPORT

.... ...OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1940.

CROOK :

Thomas Linton (W. Walton). Printer, Church Street, Crook.

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Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS.

The number of registered births was 134.

Live births		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	74	58
Illegitimate	...	0	2
		74	60
Still births			
Legitimate	...	2	3
Illegitimate	...	0	0
		2	3

On an estimated population of 10,080 these figures give a live birth rate of 13·3 per 1000 population. The rate for the whole of England and Wales was 14·6 per thousand. The total birth-rate (live and still) was 13·8 per 1000.

DEATHS.

These numbered 168, giving a death rate of 16·6 per 1000 population, which is considerably higher than the rate for the whole of England and Wales which was 14·3 per 1000. This is the highest death rate we have had since 1916, when the rate was practically similar.

MATERNAL DEATHS.

I am glad to be able to report that for the third year in succession there has not been a single death from puerperal sepsis or other puerperal cause. This is surely an eloquent tribute to the good standard of midwifery work in Weardale. The maternal death-rate for the whole of England and Wales was 2·16 per 1000 births.

INFANTILE DEATHS.

These numbered 11, equivalent to an infantile death-rate of 80 per 1000 births. This is higher than it ought to be. The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales was 55 per 1000.

Deaths from Cancer.

These amounted to 14, being 8·3 per cent of the total deaths.

Deaths from Measles.	...	2
Deaths from Whooping Cough.	...	0
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2)		0

As far as I have been able to judge, I do not think that the health or physique of either children or adults have been detrimentally affected by unemployment or food rationing.

CAUSES OF DEATH				Males.	Females.
All Causes				99	69
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid fever	...	...	0	0
2	Cerebro-spinal fever	...	...	1	0
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	0	0
4	Whooping Cough	...	...	0	0
5	Diphtheria	...	...	0	0
6	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	6	2
7	Other Tuberculosis	...	...	0	0
8	Syphilitic diseases	...	...	1	0
9	Influenza	...	...	2	1
10	Measles	...	...	1	1
11	Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis	...	...	0	0
12	Infantile Encephalitis	...	...	1	0
13	Cancer of buccal cavity & oesophagus (M)	...	...	1	0
	Cancer of uterus (F)	...	...	0	0
14	Cancer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	1	2
15	Cancer of breast	...	...	0	3
16	Cancer of other sites	...	...	3	4
17	Diabetes	...	...	0	2
18	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	...	13	10
19	Heart disease	...	...	26	15
20	Other circulatory diseases	...	...	5	2
21	Bronchitis	...	...	4	10
22	Pneumonia	...	...	1	3
23	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	3	2
24	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	2	1
25	Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	...	...	0	0
26	Appendicitis	...	...	0	0
27	Other digestive diseases	...	...	2	2
28	Nephritis	...	...	3	1
29	Puerperal & post-abortion sepsis	...	...	0	0
30	Other maternal causes	...	...	0	0
31	Premature birth	...	...	3	1
32	Congen. malformation, birth injury and infantile diseases	...	...	4	0
33	Suicide	...	...	2	1
34	Road traffic accidents	...	...	2	0
35	Other violent causes	...	...	3	2
36	All other causes	...	...	9	4
Total				99	69

Appended are the birth rates and death-rates for the preceding seven years :—

	Birth-rate per 1,000 population.	Death-rate per 1,000 population
1933	17·1	12. 8
1934	14·4	12·9
1935	15·4	13·1
1936	13·6	15·1
1937	14·5	14·1
1938	15·6	14·1
1939	14·0	13·9
1940	13·3	16·6

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health (part time)

JAS. BANNERMAN, M.B. (EDIN.)

Tuberculosis Medical Officer

Venereal Diseases Medical Officer

School Medical Officer

Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer

Obstetric Consultants

} Under
Durham County
Council

OTHERS.

Sanitary Inspector : JAS. R. RIDLEY, Cert. R.S.I., LOND.
(whole time)

Veterinary Surgeon

Public Analyst

Health Visitor

} Under Durham County Council

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Examinations of sputum, throat swabs and blood, for the diagnosis of tuberculosis, diphtheria and typhoid fever, respectively, as well as other investigations when considered necessary, are carried out at the College of Medicine, Newcastle, for all practitioners, at the expense of the County Council. During the year 40 such examinations were done and the results transmitted to me.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

A large proportion of the households in the area subscribe 4/- per annum to the Weardale Ambulance Association, whose motor ambulance is stationed at St. John's Chapel. This subscription entitles the household to four free motor journeys to or from hospital per annum. The workers in the limestone quarries have, through their union, a separate arrangement for the services of a motor ambulance from Tow Law for stretcher cases, and the payment of car charge or bus fare for less serious cases.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The whole of the area, except the sparsely populated region about Hunstanworth, is now provided with district nurse midwives, working under local associations. These are all, with the exception of Stanhope, whose nurse is not maternity trained, affiliated to and subsidized by the County Nursing Association. The Frosterley nurse-midwife attends to maternity cases in Stanhope, when requested to do so.

TREATMENT CENTRES.

Maternity and Child Welfare Centres are in operation at Wolsingham, Stanhope and St. John's Chapel. There is a V.D. Clinic at Durham and a Tuberculosis Clinic at Bishop Auckland. These are all under County Council control.

HOSPITALS.

There is no general hospital in the area.

A sick-bay for officially evacuated children has been put into operation at Harperley Hall, at the extreme eastern boundary of the area, on the instructions of the Ministry of Health. I would have preferred to have it at some more central place in the area; e.g. Rogerley Hall, but the Ministry considered Harperley more suitable, and there it had to be. There is accommodation for 12 children, with a matron in charge, and a cook.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

These were generally satisfactory and no new work was undertaken. One sample of water from a private supply was sent away for analysis and found to be unsatisfactory. Minor defects, mainly faulty taps, to the number of 57, were attended to.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE.

No new work was done.

SCAVENGING.

All the villages in the area have now got a scavenging scheme in operation. A complaint about a nuisance caused by the depositing of privy contents on a field at Westgate contiguous to dwelling houses was investigated by your Inspector, who was able to arrange for the objectionable material to be deposited elsewhere.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Some 26 privies and ash-closets were converted to water closets during the year. There are now 1,129 water closets, 217 ash closets and 319 privies in the area.

HOUSE DISINFECTION.

This was carried out at 19 houses after infectious disease. One lot of infected bedding was destroyed by burning.

SECTION D.**Housing.**

Owing to war conditions very little systematic work in regard to housing has been possible. One new dwelling house was erected by private enterprise and occupied.

Gross sanitary defects at three adjoining houses in Martin Street, Stanhope, belonging to different owners, were rectified by the provision of a W.C. and yard improvements to each house.

In June I visited the Egglestone property in Crawleyside, where considerable improvements which you had ordered were being carried out. I found that certain necessary items in the re-conditioning of the property were being omitted. Your Inspector was able to get these items included in the work being done.

Some 276 visits were made in reference to minor housing defects, and 31 houses were found to be not in all respects fit for habitation. Remedy of defects without service of formal notice was effected in 67 houses.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS.

Applications were made for 5 grants towards improvements of dwelling houses under these Acts, and 5 dwelling houses were completed and occupied by agricultural labourers or other persons in a similar economic position.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

In February, I had to call the attention of Mayfair Dairies Ltd. to the fact that dirty churns were being returned by them to various farms. The management blamed the lorry drivers for filling up half-filled churns on their journeys.

In March, with your Inspector, I had to investigate a complaint from the County veterinary staff regarding dirty byres and dirty cows at an Eastgate farm. We visited this place several times subsequently, and were satisfied that greater care was being taken.

In May there was a complaint from Mayfair Dairies, Ltd. to the effect that they had received dirty milk from a Frosterley farm, and in November there was a similar complaint from the Medical Officer of Health, Newcastle, regarding milk from a farm at Ireshopeburn. I visited both these farms, pointing out where there had evidently been negligence, and impressing on the people the necessity for greater care in their methods.

During the year 137 visits of inspection were made to byres and dairies. Improvements in the shape of better lighting, improved ventilation, new concrete floors, and repairs to roofs, doors and windows, have been carried out in 57 byres.

Local small slaughter houses have ceased to function for the duration of the war.

I visited the bakery of the Stanhope & Weardale Co-operative Society at Frosterley, and found everything satisfactory.

SECTION F.

Prevalance of, and control over, Infectious Diseases.

GENERAL (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS).

I received 249 notifications of infectious disease, and they were as follows :—

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet fever	11	10	0
Diphtheria	7	3	0
Pneumonia	8	0	4
Whooping Cough	17	0	0
Measles	194	2	2
Erysipelas	2	0	0
Ophthalmia neonatorum	2	0	0
Puerperal pyrexia	4	0	0
Typhoid fever	2	2	0
Cerebro-spinal fever	1	1	1
Poliomyelitis	1	1	0
Total	249	19	7

The district was exceptionally free from both diphtheria and scarlet fever.

The two cases of typhoid fever occurred in upper Weardale, and both recovered, though one of these patients subsequently died from kidney disease in hospital in Newcastle. In both instances I gave prophylactic typhoid inoculations to the other members of the households.

The extensive epidemic of measles was practically confined to upper Weardale. Fortunately the disease was of an exceptionally mild type, and there was not a single death in this epidemic. Two fatal cases of measles occurred at the eastern end of the district.

You authorized me to admit any cases of evacuated children suffering from measles, under certain conditions, to the Isolation Hospital, and two such were admitted.

Towards the end of the year, you instructed me to arrange for a scheme of diphtheria immunization. This work was carried out in 1941.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Three fresh notification were received, all pulmonary cases.

There were 8 deaths, from pulmonary Tuberculosis. The Tuberculosis death rate was .8 per 1,000 population.

Age Periods.			New Cases.				Deaths.			
			Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...								
1	...	...		1						
5	...	...								
15	...	...	1	1			1			
25	...	...					1	2		
35	...	...					2			
45	...	...					2			
55	...	...								
65 and upward	...	...								
Totals ...			1	2	0	0	6	2	0	0

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

A considerable amount of time has had to be devoted to the arrangements for first aid services etc, but no details of this work are included in this report.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

Gas. Bannerman.





